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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

WATER COLOR PAINTING.

BY JAMES CARRUTHERS.

WATER color as compared with oil painting may be said in pictorial delineations to excel in softness and delicacy of hue, and to supply the painter with greater means of representing atmospheric effects, including those of perspective. Objects are shown as fading more gently from the sight, and therefore more naturally, distance is rendered more palpable to the eyes, and what are strictly aerial effects are more pleasingly rendered.

When water color painting is executed on paper the absorbency of the ground and the granulous character of the surface is all in its favor. Then, again, white is but slightly tinted. On wood surfaces and using oil as a vehicle, the painter necessarily proceeds to prime to obtain a solid impervious surface, and to maintain in their integrity successive coats of paint. The roughness of the texture of the paper used, visible to some extent to the naked eye, but far more conspicuous under the telescope, is an obvious scenical advantage as delicately varying the surface, the elevations receiving less color than the depressions. Thus what the most skilful manipulation could not fully effect, is accomplished by the conditions of surface. Oil painting is apt to fill up all interstices of surface, unless where there is extreme irregularity, and in certain styles of mural painting this irregularity is provided for in the variation of the wall surface, so as to create, like water color on boards, lights and half lights, shadows and half shadows, the cavities receiving more color and reflecting less light. The eye averages these variations and harmonizes them. In fresco work we see this very fully illustrated, through the multitude of particles of the crystalized hydrate of lime admitting of tender, airy gradations.

The water color artist on paper has at his command and obtains some of his finest effects by applying washes, which float the color over the ground, diversifying by different shades or depths the self same color. These washes are applied, when properly done, rapidly and accurate with a brush full of water. It will frequently happen that by these washes fine accidental effects, in perfect harmony with the design, are obtained.

The fame of most of the great painters whose names are associated with the period of the Renaissance, was achieved by use of water color. They showed by their superb frescos in churches, monasteries and other edifices that water colors are adapted to the highest ranges of art, that grace and beauty, strength and grandeur lie within its compass. Among the names that have been made famous by their genius in this line for all time, are Cimabue, Giotto, Masaccio, Ghirlandaio (Michael Angelo's master), Perugino (the master of Raphael), Raphael, Lionarde da Vinci, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Andrea del Sarto, Andrea Mantegna, Correggio, Buonarrotti and others.

We have very fully described in our columns the process of fresco painting, one charm of which is in the luminosity of the colors. In fresco and secco lime is mixed with the colors themselves; not so in tempera painting. Some of the Renaissance painters introduced gold into their fresco designs.

FRENCH PAPER HANGINGS.

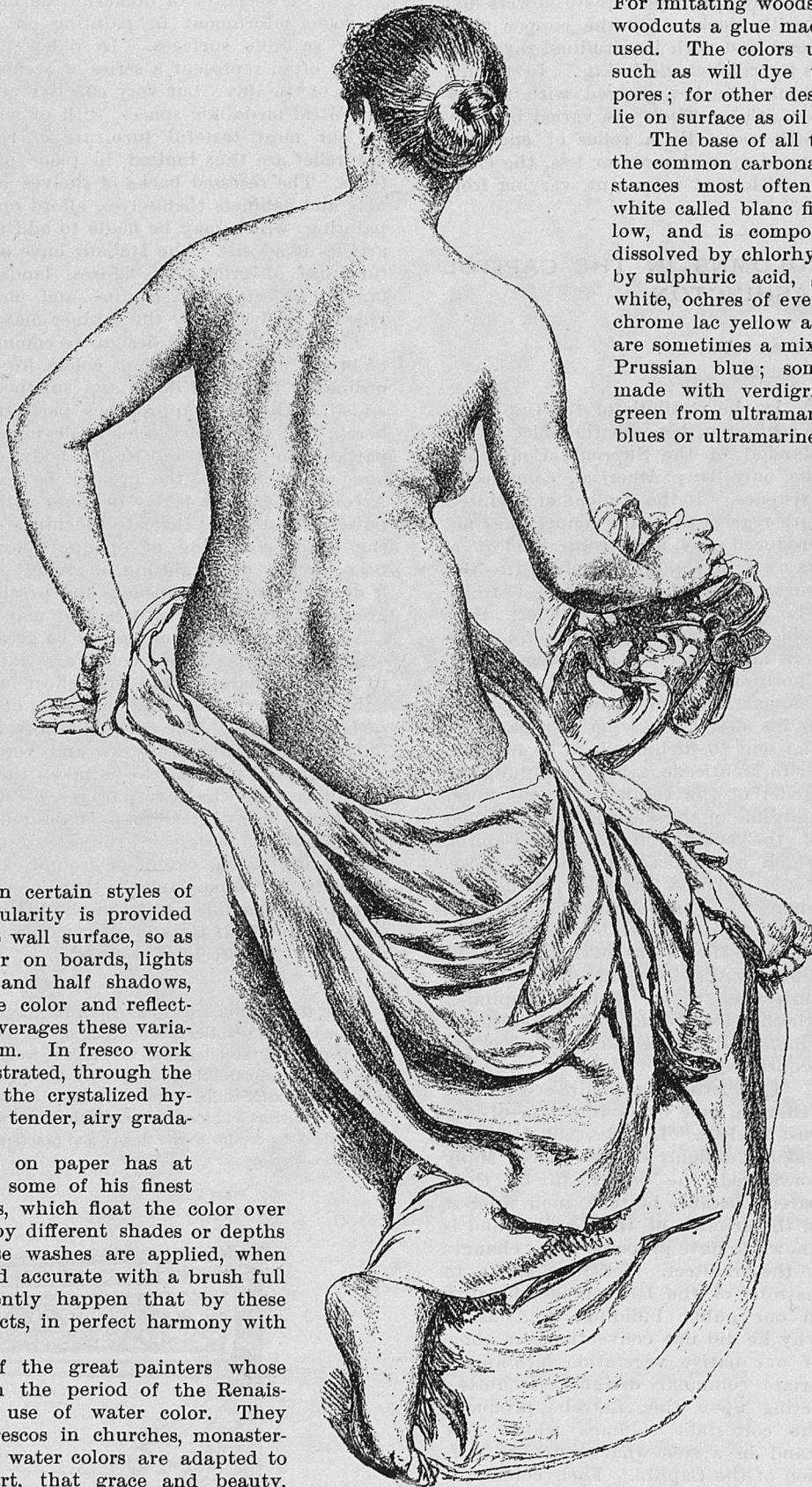
IT will be of interest to sketch the process by which in the Parisian manufactories of paper hangings the paper receives its ornamentation. The several qualities of the paper on which fancy devices, flowers, figures, gilding and various imitations of stuffs, marbles and wood are displayed is classed as gray, ordinary gray and fine white, and, except for special purposes, is made of the uniform size of four square metres. The vehicle of the colors is animal glue, composed of shreadings of rabbit skins or old harness leather. For imitating woods and for impressions from woodcuts a glue made from amyllum or starch is used. The colors used for imitating stuffs are such as will dye the paper, penetrating its pores; for other descriptions the colors merely lie on surface as oil point on prepared canvas.

The base of all the ordinary tints is whitening, the common carbonate of lime. The other substances most often employed are a peculiar white called blanc fixe, which does not turn yellow, and is composed of carbonate of baryta dissolved by chlorhydric acid and precipitated by sulphuric acid, glaze paste, aluminous lime white, ochres of every shade, yellows made with chrome lac yellow and yellow oak. The greens are sometimes a mixture of chrome yellow and Prussian blue; sometimes Schweinfurt green, made with verdigris and arsenic; sometimes a green from ultramarine. The blues are Prussian blues or ultramarine.

The reds are lacs, either from woods or from cochineal. The blacks are German black or bone black. Colors are applied by brushes or by blocks formed of three layers of wood, the fibres crossing alternately, so as to avoid warping, and fixed by a glue called cheese glue, because it is made with cheese *a la pie*. The two first layers are of pine; the last, on which the design is engraved, of pear. The edges are faced with slips of brass. For grounding the paper the roll is spread on a large table, one end held by a fixed vice, the other by a movable vice gently balanced by a weight, so as to stretch the paper whilst a coat of equal and smooth color is being laid. In certain high priced qualities several coats of color are employed in grounding, and the paper is then polished and satined. French manufacturers have not as yet got beyond the arrangement for rubbing of a brush fixed at end of a movable lever, and attached by huge joints to the ceiling of the workshop, and moving backwards and forwards. For marbles and imitations of Persian calicoes, the satining is executed with a simple flint or agate fixed at the end of a counterweighted rod, worked in a pear wood groove. To give further

brilliancy wax soap is employed. Varnishing of glazed papers is of course the same all the world over.

The palette of the colors is a woolen cloth spread upon leather or strong canvas soaked with linseed oil. The apparatus rests on a strongly constructed table, surmounted by a horizontal beam, fastened to the ceiling by two baulks, which supports beneath it the end of a wooden lever. The printer spreads out a roll, held by means of a rod fastened to the free end of a table, and the palette having been sufficiently coated, and



DESIGN FOR THE CEILING OF THE NEW VIENNA OPERA HOUSE,
BY M. CHARLEMONT.